MILITARY DECISION MAKING PROCESS (MDMP)

An Introduction to the Process

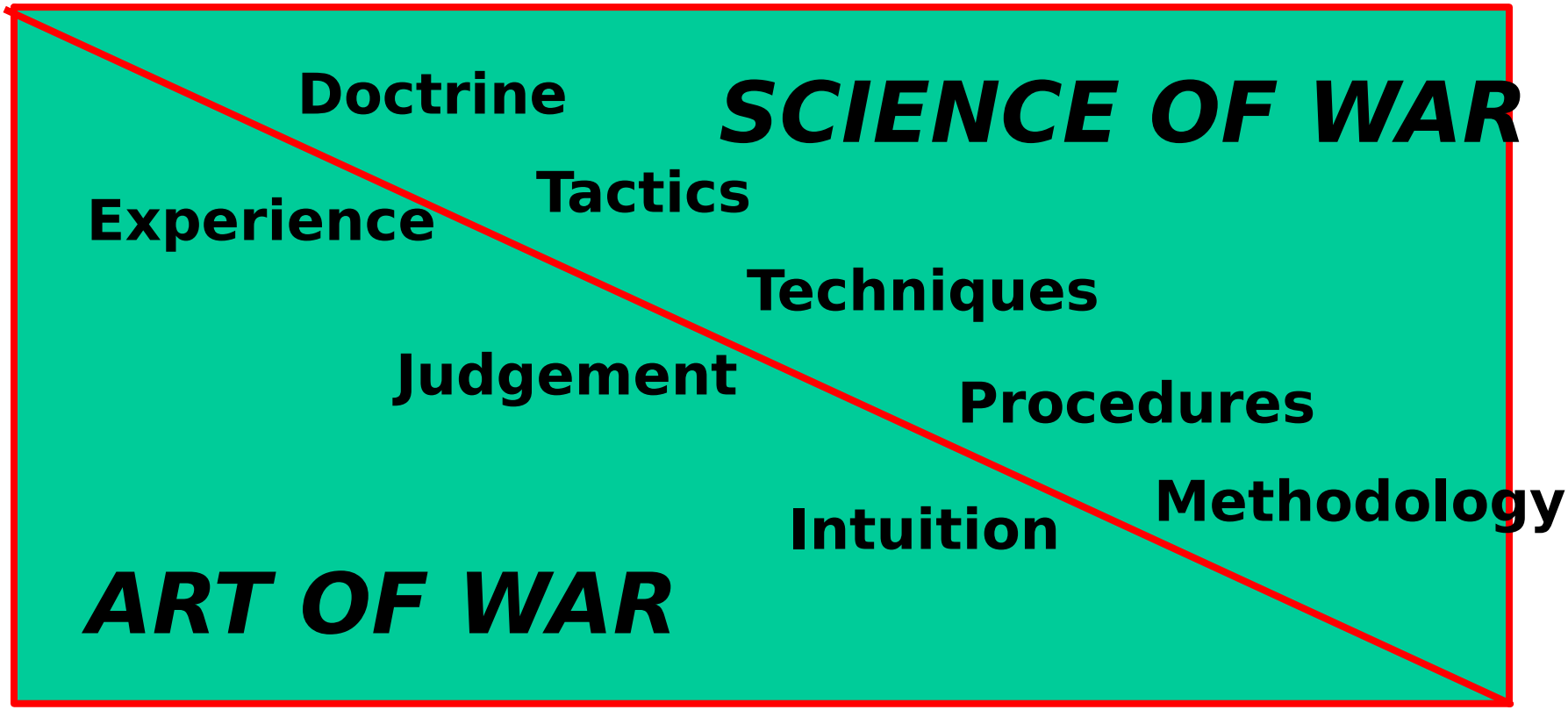
“I am definitely going to take a course on time management... just as soon as I can work it into my schedule.”

FM 101-5
FM101-5-1
CGSG ST100-3

INTRODUCTION TO THE ART AND SCIENCE of MDMP

Decision making is both *science* and *art*. Many aspects of military operations – movement rate fuel consumption, weapons effects – are quantifiable and, therefore, part of the *science* of war. Other aspects – the impact of leadership complexity of operations, and uncertainty regarding enemy intentions – belong to the *art* of war.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
THE ART & SCIENCE OF WAR



MDMP EXAMINEND

- MDMP is doctrine driven – terms / symbols
- MDMP produces integration, coordination, coordination, and synchronization
- Products developed during the full MDMP may be used during subsequent planning sessi
- Results in a detailed operation order / plan
- A full MDMP is detailed, deliberate, sequentia and ***time consuming***

TIME MANAGEMENT

- Time, more than any other factor, determine the detail with which the staff can plan
- Once time allocation is made, the Cdr must determine whether or not to do the full MDMP or abbreviate it
- One third / two third rule
- Timeline established and enforced

MDMP
7 STEP PROCESS

Step 1: Receipt of Mission
Step 2: Mission Analysis
Step 3: Course of Action (COA) Development
Step 4: COA Analysis
Step 5: COA Comparison
Step 6: COA Approval
Step 7: Orders Production

RECEIVE THE MISSION

- Usually received via WARNO from higher
- Critical that WARNO has all available information
- Followed by actual plan / order with specific tasks
- At receipt of mission, the battle staff is alerted
- Staff begins developing estimates
- Commander conducts initial assessment and issues planning guidance
- XO / S3 develops a timeline and issues WARNO 1

ELEMENTS OF A WARNING ORDER (WARNO)

- Five paragraph foremat
- WARNO’s maximize subordinate planning ti
- Detail depends on information and time ava
- Clearly informs recipient of what tasks he m

  and informs him of possible future tasks
- A WARNO does not authorize execution oth

  planning unless specifically stated

WARNING ORDER CONTENTS

ISSUED IMMEDIATELY AFTER CDR GIVES HIS GUIDANCE

- Restated Mission
- Commander's Intent
- Unit's AO (Sketch, Overlay, or Description)
- CCIR
- NET / NLT Movement Times
- Reconnaissance Instructions for Subordinate Units
- Security Measures
- Deception Guidance
- Guidance on Rehearsals
- Mobility and Countermobility Guidance
- Specific Priorities
- Time line!
- Guidance on Rehearsals Deception Guidance
- Mobility and Countermobility Guidance
- Specific Priorities

COMMANDER's INITIAL GUIDANCE

ALTHOUGH BRIEF, IT INCLUDES:

- **How to abbreviate MDMP…**Develop only two COAs…
- **Time allocation…**Time is short, focus your COA analysis on massing fires between PL RED and OBJ TIGER…
- **Liaison as needed…** Send an S2/S4 LNO team to the local militia garrison in town until we cross the northern bridge with our trains…
- **Initial reconnaissance…**I want initial PAs reconned by the RSO NLT 1200 hrs today…
- **Authorized movement…** Advance parties may depart NET 1800 hrs…
- **Additional tasks…**I want a technical rehearsal with the Reinforcing Bn focused on counterfire…

MISSION ANALYSIS

- Consists of 17 steps
- Not necessarily sequential
- May be concurrent
- Defines tactical problem and begins process of determining feasible solutions
- Cdr develops own estimate to assess staff's work
- Detailed staff estimates are initiated
- **Time management is essential throughout process**

MISSION ANALYSIS STEPS

1. Review the Higher HQ Order
2. Conduct Initial Intelligence Prep of Battlefield (IPB)
3. Determine Specified, Implied, and Essential Tasks

   SPECIFIED: Specifically assigned by higher's order

   IMPLIED: Not stated in higher's order, are derived through analysis

   ESSENTIAL: Tasks that must be executed to accomplish the mission
4. Review Available Assets

MISSION ANALYSIS STEPS, con't

5. Determine Limitations -- may be a requirement or prohibition
6. Facts / Assumptions Relevant to the Mission
7. Conduct Risk Assessment
8. Determine Initial Commander's Critical Information Requirements **(CCIR)** info required by the Cdr that directly effects his decisions

   PIR, Priority Intelligence Requirement: Information about the enemy

MISSION ANALYSIS STEPS, con't

FFIR, Friendly Force Information Requirement: Information the commander needs about the forces available for an operation

EEFI, Essential Elements of Friendly Information:

Key questions likely to be asked by threat officials

and Intel systems about specific friendly intentions, capabilities, and activities

9. Determine the Initial Recon Plan
10. Plan Use of Available Time
11. Write the Restated Mission
12. Conduct a Mission Analysis Briefing

MISSION ANALYSIS STEPS, con't

13. Approve the Restated Mission
14. Develop the Cdr's Intent: A clear concise stateme
of what the staff must do to succeed with respect to t
enemy and terrain and to the desired endstate
15. Issue the Cdr's Guidance
16. Issue WARNO 2
17. Review Facts/Assumptions

CDR's GUIDANCE

- Specifies COAs to consider
- CCIRs
- Recon / deception guidance
- Fires / mobility guidance
- Security measures
- CS / CSS priorities
- ***Time plan***
- Type of order to issue
- Type of rehearsal
- Additional information

CDR'S GUIDANCE

Examples are:

- **Wargame only against the enemy's most likely COA…**
- **I see the location of my TOC and ALOC as an EEFI…**
- **I will not risk my mortar teams crossing the LD any sooner than H-2…**
- **For this mission, priority of my maintenance effort goes to B company…**
- **I want two hours minimum allocated to the technical rehearsal on our timeline…**
- **Issue a written order, complete with staff estimates attached…**
- **Since adequate time is available, we will conduct a terrain walk, followed by a sand table rehearsal, of the defense…**

COA CRITERIA

- **Suitable:** Must accomplish the mission and comply with the Cdr's guidance
- **Feasible:** Unit must have the capability to accomplish the mission
- **Acceptable:** Tactical/operational advantage gained by executing the COA must justify the cost
- **Distinguishable:** Each COA must differ significantly from any others
- **Complete COAs:** Must be a complete mission statement

COA DEVELOPMENT

- Positions force for future Ops
- Provides flexibility to meet unforeseen events
- Provides max latitude for subordinate initiative
- Complete answers -- who, what, when, where, why and how
- Six step process
- Time / Risk management continues

STEPS TO DEVELOP COA's

- Step 1 - Analyze Relative Combat Power
- Step 2 - Generate Options
- Step 3 - Array Initial Forces
- Step 4 - Develop the Scheme of Maneuver
- Step 5 - Assign Headquarters
- Step 6 - Prepare COA Statements and Sketches

COA BRIEF (Optional)

- Update IPB
- Possible enemy COAs (SITEMP)
- The restated mission
- The Cdr’s intent (two up)
- The COA statement and sketch
- The rationale for each COA

COA ANALYSIS (WARGAME)

- Identifies which COA best accomplishes the

Mission

- Determines Max combat power
- Common vision of the battle
- Conditions and resources
- Conditions and resources required for success

COA ANALYSIS (WARGAME) cont.

- When and where to apply the force's capabilities
- Focus IPB
- Coordination requirements to produce synchronized results
- Determine most flexible COA
- Attempts to visualize the flow of the battle

WARGAMING STEPS

1. Gather the tools, materials, and data
2. List all friendly units
3. List assumptions, to include higher HQ
4. List known critical events / decision points
5. Determine evaluation criteria
6. Select the wargaming method
7. Select a recording technique
8. Wargame the battle and assess results

WARGAMING TECHNIQUES

- Three *recommended* techniques – Belt, avenue in Depth, and the Box
- Each considers area of interest and all enemy forces affecting outcome of the operation
- Techniques can be used separately or in combination
- Staff may develop a method of it's own

BELT TECHNIQUE

- Divides battlefield into belts running width of AO
- Most effective in phased operations
- Enemy deployed in clearly defined echelons
- Belts can be adjacent or overlap
- Focuses simultaneously on all forces affecting a particular event
- Belts may include more than one critical event

AVENUE-IN-DEPTH TECHNIQUE

- Focuses on one avenue of approach at a time
- Begins with main effort
- Good for offensive COAs
- In the defense when canalizing terrain inhibits mutual support

BOX TECHNIQUE

- Detailed analysis of a critical area
- Most useful when time is limited (hasty attack)
- Staff isolates area and focuses on critical events in it
- Assumes friendly units can handle most situations on battlefield
- Essential task focused

WARGAMING

- Record wargame results
- Create a decision support template (DST)
- Wargame the COAs (strengths/weaknesses)
- Create a synchronization matrix
  - Allows staff to synchronize COAs across time and space
  - Graphic decision making product
- Passage of time between creation of Synch matrix and execution may result in changes

WARGAMING cont

- **Action-Reaction-Counteraction Cycle**
- **Action:** events initiated by side with the initiative
- **Reaction:** Other sides action's in response
- **Counteraction:** first sides reaction to response
- Sequence is continued until critical event is completed
- Friendly and enemy

WARGAMING CONSIDERATIONS

- Order of battle friendly/enemy
- Movement considerations
- Weapons systems and effects
- Setting conditions for success
- Force protection
- CS/CSS assets required
- COA can be modified (METT-TC)

COA COMPARISON, BRIEFING, AND APPROVAL

- Wargaming sessions may cover the entire operation, or a particular phase
- COAs are compared against others
- Effective criteria used by the staff
- Staff selects a COA to recommend
- Based on Cdr's selection / modifications, a WARNO is issued

WARNO #3

As a minimum, with any WARNO, address these topics:

1. **SITUATION**
   - **a. Enemy forces.** Significant changes in composition, disposition, COAs.
   - **c. Attachments/detachments.** Any additional support received.
2. **MISSION**
3. **EXECUTION**

   Intent:

   - **a. Concept of Operations.** Provide as much info as available.
   - **b. Tasks to subordinate units.** Any info on execution, movement, recon, or security.
   - **c. Tasks to CS/CSS.** Same as above.
   - **d. Coordinating instructions.** As available. CCIR, risk, deception, priorities, timeline, orders and rehearsals, meetings, earliest movement, etc.

All other paragraphs, although optional, should be addressed if information if pertinent and available.

MDMP COMPLETION AND ORDERS PRODUCTION

Based on the Cdr's guidance the staff refines the selected COA, completes the plan, and prepares to issue the order. The Cdr reviews and approves the order which is than produced. The Cdr and staff should conduct confirmation briefings with subordinates immediately following order issue to ensure subordinates understand the Cdr's intent and guidance.

TIME CONSTRAINED MDMP

Before a unit can conduct decision making in a time constrained environment it must master the steps in the full MDMP. The process can only be shortened if it is fully understood at every step of the process. Training on these steps must be through and result in a series of staff battle drills that are tailored to the time available. Training must be stressful and replicate realistic conditions.

TIME CONSTRAINED MDMP

- Time is the most significant factor. It is nonrenewable and the most critical resource
- Omitting steps from the MDMP is not the answer
- Anticipation, organization, and prior preparation are key
- Cdr decides how to shorten process
- WARNO's become increasingly important

TECHNIQUES

- Increasing Cdr involvement allowing him to make decisions throughout process
- Cdr becomes more directive in his guidance, limiting options
- Cdr Limits number of COA’s (saves most time)
- Maximize parallel planning

CONCLUSION

COA Analysis

COA Development

Mission Analysis

Receipt of Mission

COA Comparison

COA Approval

Orders Production

“Heck by the time a man scratches his behind, clears his throat, and tells me how smart he is, we've already wasted fifteen minutes.”

LBJ